

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NIAMEY 01001 141721Z

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ACTION L-02

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 IO-10 MMS-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 SCA-01 AID-05 /068 W

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R 141635Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0221

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PORG, NG

SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS IN NIGER

REF: STATE 012320 AND STATE 034811

1. NIGER HAS ESTABLISHED A POSITIVE INTERNATIONAL RECORD IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS. SWIFT ADHERENCE AFTER INDEPENDENCE TO THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH WAS INCORPORATED INTO NIGER'S CONSTITUTION, AND SUBSEQUENTLY, CONSISTENTLY POSITIVE ATTITUDES AT THE UNITED NATIONS ON SIMILAR QUESTIONS INDICATE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL NORMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

2. DOMESTICALLY, HOWEVER, THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT IN NIGER DID NOT ESTABLISH AN EQUALLY POSITIVE RECORD OF RESPECT FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS. FACED WITH STRONG EXTERNALLY SUPPORTED POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN THE EARLY SIXTIES, THE DIORI GOVERNMENT ARBITRARILY ARRESTED CITIZENS WHOSE LOYALTY WAS SUSPECT. SOME WERE TRIED BY STATE SECURITY TRIBUNALS, BUT OTHERS APPARENTLY WERE IMPRISONED WITHOUT TRIAL. IN THE LAST YEAR OF THE FORMER GOVERNMENT, THERE WAS AN UPSURGE IN ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND INTELLECTUALS SUSPECTED OF OPPOSING THE REGIME.

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PAGE 02 NIAMEY 01001 141721Z

3. ONE OF THE FIRST ACTS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT AFTER SEIZING POWER IN APRIL 1974, WAS THE RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS. AT THE SAME TIME PRESIDENT DIORI AND MOST OF THE FORMER CABINET WERE IMPRISONED OR PLACED UNDER HOUSE ARREST. A SPECIAL INQUIRY COMMISSION HAS INVESTIGATED AND PRONOUNCED MOST OF THEM GUILTY OF CORRUPTION AND CONFISCATED SOME OF THEIR PROPERTIES AS COMPENSATION, BUT THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN FORMALLY TRIED.

4. THE CONTINUED "DETENTION" OF THE FORMER CABINET NOTWITHSTANDING, THE RECORD OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN NIGER IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS SHOWS IMPROVEMENT OVER THE PREVIOUS REGIME.HECK

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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